

Governor Barbour Begins “Tort Tour”; Travels to New York and Washington to Announce Mississippi’s Tort Reform Legislation to National Business Leaders

***Hopes to Convince Corporate America to “take another look”
at Mississippi as Place for Job Creation***

(Jackson, Miss.) Governor Haley Barbour is wasting no time in telling national business leaders across the country about Mississippi’s newly-passed tort reform legislation. Governor Barbour plans to meet with corporate leaders and media outlets in New York and Washington this week to officially announce the civil justice legislation that makes Mississippi a more attractive place for industries to locate.

“In recent years, Mississippi has gotten a bad reputation in national business circles as a place where employers are unfairly targeted with frivolous lawsuits. This reputation led to national publications calling Mississippi a ‘judicial hellhole’ and hurt our job creation efforts,” said Governor Barbour. “With our recent passage of meaningful tort reform, I want to tell job-creators across America that our scales of justice are now in balance. It is

time for them to come back down and take another look at Mississippi as a place to locate,” he added.

After legislators failed to pass tort reform during the 2004 Regular Session that ended May 9, Governor Barbour called a special session to address tort reform that began May 19. After two weeks of work, House and Senate leaders agreed on civil justice legislation that caps non-economic and punitive damages, protects “innocent sellers” and reforms Mississippi’s venue laws. The new law is to take effect September 1, 2004.

Governor Barbour’s Wednesday and Thursday itinerary includes:

- speaking today to a board of directors meeting of the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce**, who has given Mississippi a 50th ranking for a fair legal climate three years on a row;
- meeting Thursday with executives of **Toyota Motor Company** – who listed Mississippi’s legal climate as one of the reasons the automobile manufacturer decided not to locate one of its plants in Mississippi;
- speaking Thursday to an economic development luncheon of **business leaders** sponsored by the Mississippi Development Authority;

- meeting Thursday with the editorial board of ***Business Week*** – a business publication;
- meeting Thursday with the editorial board of ***Fortune*** – a business publication;
- appearing Thursday, at 8 a.m. CST, on ***CNBC's Squawk Box*** – a financial program geared toward business leaders; and
- appearing Thursday, at 2:30 p.m. CST, on ***FOX News with Shepard Smith***.

“I appreciate the Legislature helping pass tort reform. This is a major achievement for Mississippi, but we don’t have time to rest on our laurels. If we want to create jobs in Mississippi, we need to start spreading the news now,” said Governor Barbour.

At the conclusion of this tour, Governor Barbour and First Lady Marsha Barbour will attend the funeral of former President Ronald Reagan Friday in Washington D.C.

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